



ukulele player

New and Exciting Stuff

This is the second issue of **ukulele player**. We are excited about all the cool things that are happening behind the scenes.

This issue is ushering in some new features. We have some of what you will come to expect from **ukulele player**, ukulele reviews, artist profiles and interviews, luthier profiles, but we are introducing new features. In this issue, check out the CD review of Craig Robertson's new release, "DeChirico Street", which just became available December 7th.

Last issue, I had the honor of interviewing Alli Bee of Cosmos and this time around I have the honor of interviewing Jumpin' Jim Beloff, the founder of "Flea Market Music" and one of the catalysts in the rising popularity of the ukulele (in the language of Hawaii, the jumping flea).

We are happy to say that we have received lots of praise and enthusiastic cheers from ukulele players around the globe and, personally, I find it exhilarating to be able to write about music and ukulele.

It's really exciting to hear that people are sharing the magazine with other ukulele players and some have even printed copies and passed them around at their club meetings. I initially decided to use a PDF file as the means of distribution to give each issue of **ukulele player** a print magazine or newspaper look, but, it was also planned with high enough resolution that it would be printable with high enough quality to share it with other players.

I want to encourage everyone to submit information about your ukulele clubs, meets, festivals, and other events. Even if you don't want to provide a telephone number or e-mail address. A website URL or street address and meeting times will be added to our listings as soon after submission as possible. That way, downloading another copy of the magazine the next day, for example, you will find your posting in the current issue. We won't wait for the "next issue", we'll add your listing right away and upload the file to our servers, almost instant updates.

We are building relationships

with ukulele manufacturers to bring you reviews of ukuleles from the student models to high-end instruments. We are also working to bring you information about new models that will be coming soon.

In the way of vintage ukulele reviews, this issue features a review of a very fine Martin "0", and she is really loud and clear.

The third issue will bring lots of great reviews. That issue will have a review of a Pohaku concert ukulele custom-made by Peter Hurney.

We are planning each issue well in advance to keep things fresh and interesting.

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the Re-entrants...

They have been called the hottest cover-band in England, extraordinary entertainers, and a lot more. Phil Doleman and Ian Emerson are the Re-entrants and they bring you a unique mix of good-time rock and roll tunes from an assortment of great bands of the past and present.

The Re-entrants get their name

from the tuning style of a "standard" ukulele (the soprano, concert, and tenor all use this type of tuning).

Phil and Ian will rock your socks off playing songs you'll recognize in a whole new way. My personal favorite is Soft Cell's "Tainted Love" and I have to laugh every time I hear their version of it or see their video.



I met Phil and Ian on the internet, along with a lot of other talented players and entertainers. I have known of them for quite a while, so naturally, when I started planning to create **ukulele player**, I wanted to interview Phil and Ian for a story on their act.

Q: Phil Doleman and Ian Emerson, So, tell me how you met.

A: Phil: We actually met on the Ukulele Cosmos forum (www.ukulelecosmos.com), and discovered we only lived a few miles away from each other. I already had the idea of forming a uke band of some kind, and told Ian via e-mail before we had even met. As one of the few uke players in the area, he didn't want to miss out! Originally I wanted to form a quartet, with maybe an acoustic bass in there, but when we got together for a jam we thought it would be fun to see just how much we could accomplish with just the two ukes. We did our first gig a couple on months after we first got together and haven't stopped.

Ian: I was relieved when the bigger band didn't pan out - in my experience bigger bands tend to split into smaller factions of two anyway - musicians naturally pair-bond!

Q: How long did it take the two of you to figure out that you wanted to play together?

Phil: We clicked almost immediately. We both brought

a list of songs we wanted to do to our first meeting and found that a lot of the songs were the same. We're both roughly the same age and even have matching bald heads! As for playing, we both have different approaches to playing and therefore tend to almost instinctively go for different chord inversions. Rhythmically we click, too, which I think is extremely important to our sound. The band was formed at that first meeting.

Ian: We don't always agree on material or arrangements, but have different strategies for killing off songs we don't like: I moan and moan until I wear Phil down; if he doesn't like something, his enthusiasm never actually wanes, but he becomes conveniently forgetful at rehearsals until they die of neglect.

Q: You guys are billed as "the Re-entrants" with the slogan, "because size isn't important" in the *brand*, so to speak. Tell me about how you arrived at the name.

Phil: I already had the name, logo and slogan before we even met up. I wanted a name that said "ukulele" without actually saying the word ukulele, so, I put a picture of a uke in the logo (it could, of course, be a guitar if it weren't for the four tuning pegs) and the reference to re-entrant tuning is a clue and a reward for the uke aware. The size reference is a joke, you know the size isn't important it's what you do with it that counts



saying, which is a little self-deprecating and usually gets a laugh from the ladies!

Ian: I didn't originally like the name, but have massively warmed to it, so much so that I frequently answer to 'Ian Re-entrant' nowadays. I've always loved that tagline though!

Q: You guys play a bit of everything, but, mostly contemporary and classic rock, how long was it before you decided on the style of music you guys play?

Phil: Because our lists were so similar, and were all big hits from the 60s to the present, we sort of stuck with that. We have a rule of only doing one song by each artist, and it has to be a huge hit. We aren't just a uke band for uke audiences most of our gigs are played to non uke-aware audiences so we can't be playing obscure stuff. Also the juxtaposition of ukulele and song not supposed to be played on a ukulele doesn't

really work if the song is not recognised by the majority of the audience. We also try and avoid song we think would work on the uke, perverse though it sounds. If we hear a song and think "how on earth could we pull that off on uke" then we usually give it a go. The arrangement is very important to us. We don't want to just strum the chords, we want to get as many of the little parts that make up the original in there as possible. (note: they do that very well)

Ian: I have a background which takes in those types of covers in more traditional guitar bands, so it wasn't much of a leap to me. When one of us has an idea, we rough it out from memory first, without listening to the original; it's amazing how different aspects of a song are prevalent in each of our memories. It ends up like a composite sketch - the sort a police artist might do. Then we listen to the original together, and iron out the inconsistencies.

Q: I know that you released a CD last year, have you thought about recording an album and playing guitar as well as ukulele?

Phil: No, we're definitely a ukulele duo. It's sad to talk about marketing, but I do spend a lot of time selling The Re-entrants to promoters, venues, festivals etc. We are very easily identifiable in what we do and I think adding other instruments would make that not so clear to those who might want to book us. If we were to do it, it would have to be under a different band name.

Ian: Uke all the way. I love the portability and versatility of the uke; there's nothing better than watching another band struggling with a drum kit or huge amps! We'd fight horribly if one of us had to draw the short, six-stringed straw.

Q: When you play a gig, how many instruments do you bring along? Is there a favourite gigging uke?

Phil: I take two ukuleles, just in case I break a string! My main gigging uke is the prototype Pete Howlett Uklectic (www.uklectic.com), a semi-solid body concert uke with an undersaddle pickup, and I have a Pono concert, also equipped with a pickup. We do occasionally play into instrument mics (for which I would use the Pono or my Ken Timms soprano), but as most of our gigs are noisy pubs or large (300+ capacity) venues with huge PA systems the only

practical way to do it is by plugging in.

Ian: I carry two ukes too. I'm insistent that my spare uke should look, sound and react as closely to my main uke as possible, so any necessary change is as seamless as possible, so I carry two identical black Applause UAE20s. They are great all-rounders and practically indestructible. On the odd occasion I know we'll be playing through a mic or totally acoustically, I'll pack my Kiwaya KTS-7. I see the Applause ukes as stage equipment, but the Kiwaya is usually my 'leisure uke.'

Q: How about recording?

Phil: We've been through a lot of ukes in the last 18 months, but I think I played the Pono concert on most of the CD, and occasionally my Bruko number 5.

Ian: Now I think I would use the Kiwaya. For the last CD, I primarily used an Ohana SK-35 (which I no longer have). On one track (I won't tell you which!) where 'dusty end' precision and clarity was paramount, I cheated a little and used a Mahalo Baritone, tuned GCEA. I don't own that now either.

Recently I made the decision to commit to 100% soprano; I've always played soprano on stage, so it seemed like the sensible way of keeping some consistency in my playing.

Q: You have some performance videos. Do you bring someone along to shoot those?

Phil: The camera is usually wedged on a window ledge somewhere!

Ian: The audience is such a huge part of what we do, videos never really capture that, and the 'spare room' vids particularly are really missing that dynamic. They were only intended as rehearsal aids, and I was mortified when they initially went online. I'm far less self-assured about submitting vids and recordings as I am with live stuff, where the feedback is instantaneous. I wouldn't be surprised if we didn't put out any more of the 'two blokes on a sofa' vids. I far prefer the ones with a crowd.

Q: You both have years of musical experience. What other instruments do you play and how long have you played them?

Phil: I started on Bass guitar 22 years ago, then added guitar a year later. I picked up mandolin, harmonica, penny whistle and ocarina a couple of years after that. I started to toy with 5 string banjo in 2003 and fist picked up a uke in 2005.

Ian: I played guitar in bands from about 18, and only got into other instruments once I'd got my first uke, mistaking the uke-phoria for just learning another instrument. I bought, learned (and sold) loads of instruments, including banjo, bass, violin, autoharp, mandolin. I now have a piano (mostly because it's too ungainly to move), one guitar (which lives in my son's room) and my ukes.

Q: Phil, you had a number two hit on the charts in the UK, what was the name of the band at the time and what did you play? How old were you at the time?

Phil: I was latecomer to chart success! It was 2004 and I was thirty-four. I had just received a five-string banjo as a leaving gift from work and a month later was asked by a friend who ran a music website if I knew any banjo players for a project. I lied and said I could play, and found myself in the band 4-4-2, recording a version of Dexy's Midnight Runners "Come on Eileen" re-written as "Come on England" for the 2004 European Football (soccer) Cup. We got signed to a big label and promoted by a national newspaper. I got to play at being a pop star for 4 weeks, appearing on TV and signing records. It was fun!

Q: Ian, you play solo performances and have played with other people in the past, anything note-worthy?

Ian: In old bands I supported people like Bad Manners, Big Country, Transvision Vamp, some unknowns called The Blurs or something, Fish from Marillion. I was also roped in somehow to sing Nessun Dorma behind Russell 'The Voice' Watson, both on the Des O'Connor Christmas show, and on Michael Barrymore's My Kind of Music (though we don't mention that!). Don't ask me how that happened, because it's a mystery.

Q: Most of the people you entertain are not ukulele enthusiasts, how does the crowd react to your shows? Do you get a chance to talk with the crowd much between sets or after the show? If so, what sorts of questions do they ask, I'll bet they are curious.

Phil: Crowds either *get* what we do or they don't, in which case we just function as an acoustic covers band. When they do *get it* (and most do), it works really well. The usual reaction is initial disbelief (as in "You can't be serious") quickly followed by laughter when we actually pull it off! We find the drunker and rowdier the crowd, the more we like it! We need that interaction with the crowd. The audience sometimes have no idea what a uke is, or even that we are playing ukes. We get questions about small guitars and mandolins! Those who are aware of the ukulele often ask about how it is tuned, and tell us they or their child has just got one.

Ian: We get the odd Formby dig, of course, and probably as many Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain comments they are the new Formby for colouring people's expectations. My favourite reaction, however, is the one where an audience member says: 'When we saw those little guitar-thingies we thought you were going to be rubbish (cleaned-up version), but you were brilliant!'

Q: I've seen a lot of your videos. Is there a "favourite" that you

have? How about a favourite of your fans? Is there one that the audience seems to like the most?

Phil: I really like the video of AB-BA's "Money, Money, Money" recorded at Ian's house, as we inadvertently make each other laugh, and we do laugh a lot at rehearsals. It really captures what we do. The most popular video is another rehearsal one, Tainted Love, which was picked up by a US radio station and put on their website, and as a result has had almost 40,000 views. At gigs we get a lot of comments after gigs about Motorhead's "Ace of Spades".

Ian: My three favourites are less-viewed ones: in third, Space Oddity live at the Doghouse in Loughborough, which is nice and understated; in second, Franz Ferdinand's "Take Me Out", which took ages to get right, but which I just really like how it turned out; my favourite is a one-off we did for Eurovision day, a version of Gina G's 'Ooh Ah, Just a Little Bit,' which goes horribly wrong at the end, to much hilarity. There are other live vids of us which aren't on our YouTube channel as others have posted them my favourite "Ace of Spades" is from a gig called "Lumb Farm Ashes".

Q: So, you guys are full-time musicians. Have you ever thought about shopping originals to a label? Now that ukulele is becoming a hot item, it might now be too abstract a notion. Any thoughts?

Phil: We've both been down that road before. Both of us have solo albums of originals on iTunes (both of which feature uke) and I spent years trying to get my original material accepted by record companies.

Record companies are also struggling even with big acts, so it's much harder to get any kind of deal nowadays. What we don't want to do is get too big for our boots and let our egos take over, and think we are "too good for covers". We are earning more of a living now than either of us ever did playing originals. I always remind myself that the London Philharmonic Orchestra probably don't say, "Stuff Beethoven, lets write our own stuff!"

Ian: One of the first things we said when we got together was that it was about fun, and not to entertain artistic pretensions. I do write original ukulele songs, but they would have no place in the Re-entrants.

Q: You guys have been called "England's Hottest Cover Band" in a clipping I saw. Do you get a lot of press locally?

Phil: We get some, but oddly most of our gigs are not in our home town! Much of our press is in out of town papers (when we are playing somewhere I always contact their local press) and on the web. I'm pretty good at coming up with press releases and ideas to get us into the public eye, and we also gig a lot, which makes it much easier

to get noticed and generate a following. We started gigging halfway through 2007 and by the end of 2008 we had played 64 gigs (not including the open mics we did in the early days). It works out that, on average, we have done a gig every week since we started.

Ian: "Hottest cover band"? We do sweat a lot, but we are thinking of buying a desk fan!

Q: When will we hear a fully produced studio album from the Re-entrants?

Phil: I think the first CD is as produced as we want to get. It was recorded live into one microphone as we wanted it to be an accurate reproduction of how we sound live. The idea was that it would sound like we were there in the corner of your living room. We did try recording separate tracks of each instrument, but we lost the interaction we have when playing, which is an important part of our sound. Also, if we added more tracks than we could feasibly play live it would take away the idea of us trying to get as much of the original song onto 8 strings. We are talking about doing a second CD, and we may change the way we record a little, but it will still be the natural sound of two ukes and two vocals. Maybe we'll do a live album.

Ian: We are a live thing, videos and recordings never quite capture that experience. I think the only thing I would add when we do another one is an audience.

Q: Are you going to play any ukulele festivals in the coming year?

Phil: We're playing several big music festivals, but at the moment only one ukulele festival, and as the line-up hasn't been announced yet you'll just have to wait and see!

Ian: It's a different experience playing to uke-savvy audiences, great, but also quite nerve-wracking. You can't help feeling they're thinking: 'Hang on we do that!'

Oh, and it'd be cool if you could mention the web address www.thereentrants.co.uk

Editor's Note: This is a long interview, but it covers a lot of material and both Phil and Ian have shared a lot of information. If you want to begin gigging and working an audience, you can learn a lot from both of these guys.





Making beautiful music is your passion, helping you do it is ours.

Jumpin' Jim Beloff

Leading a Ukulele Revival

Not all that long ago, if you mentioned the word ukulele most people thought of Tiny Tim singing "Tip Toe Through the Tulips" or maybe Don Ho singing "Tiny Bubbles", but most people thought of the ukulele as a toy.

In the Roaring Twenties, the ukulele was considered a serious instrument and famous players performed on Vaudeville stages, in movies, and later even played on television. But interest in ukulele has always been cyclical. The first wave of popularity came in 1915 when the ukulele was introduced to mainland USA in an exhibition in San Francisco, California.

Subsequent waves of popularity came in the USA and between them, the ukulele left the radar scope almost entirely.

I'd like to introduce one of the modern-day evangelists of ukulele, Jumpin' Jim Beloff.

Jumpin' Jim was a trend-setter in this most recent revival of

ukulele music and he set the stage for today's performers, like Jake Shimabukuro, to catch audiences world-wide.

I asked Jim if we could interview him for this issue of **UKULELE PLAYER** and he agreed to talk with us and share his story.

Q: Jumpin' Jim Beloff, I heard that you came upon your love of the ukulele quite by accident. Tell our readers how you first discovered the ukulele and how your passion for the instrument began.

A: In 1991, my wife Liz and I moved to Los Angeles from New York City. At the time I was working for Billboard magazine and Liz was a film graphics designer specializing in movie trailers and corporate logos. We were also major flea market fans having spent many Sundays at the old 26th Street flea market in New York City. Within our first month in LA we visited the Rose Bowl Flea Market in Pasadena, found a Martin tenor uke lying on a

blanket and bought it on a whim.

Q: How long did it take you to get up to speed playing ukulele? Did it just come naturally?

A: It came fairly quickly. I was a pretty good guitarist very influenced by James Taylor and Kenny Rankin and was struck immediately by the warmth of the tenor (I instinctively tuned it DGBE\high D). Also it had a size advantage over the guitar. At the time I traveled a good deal for Billboard and often wished I had my guitar with me. Due to the inconvenience, though, I never thought to take it. On the other hand here was this much smaller instrument that I could carry on the plane.

There were two other advantages I noticed right off. One was that the ukulele sound (dgbE re-entrant) seemed to support the kinds of songs I liked to write. I was a musical theater composition major in college with big admiration for the great American songbook, Tin-Pan-Alley writing and, of course, musical theater scores and many of these kinds of tunes seemed to feel very right on the uke. My other observation was that while on the guitar I sometimes would play four, five or six strings depending on the chord, with the uke I was playing all four strings all the time. The uke seemed to be like a portable barbershop quartet with four independent voices you could work with to achieve all kinds of sophisticated chords and sounds.

Q: Do you still have that first ukulele?

A: Yes!

Q: Your enthusiasm has brought a lot of people to the ukulele. How long after you began playing did you start "Flea Market Music"?

A: Very soon after we found the Martin tenor we visited an old east LA music store where we found a treasure trove of old unsold 40s and 50s uke songbooks from the last waves of interest. Of course none of these were in print anymore and the ukulele racks in music stores at the time were empty or non-existent. After playing through some of the surprisingly sophisticated arrangements from the three Cliff "Ukulele Ike" Edwards songbooks we found, I thought there might be some interest in a new songbook that included the best arrangements from those three books. That became our first "Jumpin' Jim's" songbook known as *Ukulele Favorites*. We were able to attract the Hal Leonard Corp. (the well-known print music company) as a distributor simply because they didn't have anything for ukulele at the time. In the course of producing this book, Liz came up with the "Jumpin' Jim's" brand name and "Flea Market Music" based on where we found the first uke.

Q: In 1999 you brought the "Fluke" onto the scene, followed by the "Flea", how did that come about? Tell us about the "The Magic Fluke Company."

A: In 1999 there weren't many luthiers making quality ukes under \$200. Liz and I were fascinated by the Maccaferri plastic ukes and wondered if we could find a high-end plastic manufacturer to make a contemporary version. We were also inspired by the design and color of the Apple iMacs at the time and wondered about a plastic ukulele that could be as colorful. My brother-in-law, Dale Webb, an engineer with molding and woodworking in his background, had been following our interest and began to design what eventually became the Fluke. We introduced the first Flukes at the 1999 NAMM music trade show and were blown away by the response. Dale and my sister, Phyllis, jumped into the uke manufacturing business as The Magic Fluke Co. The Flea uke was born a few years later to satisfy the need for a smaller, soprano-sized uke that could accommodate kids and smaller fingers.

Q: I now see Flukes and Fleas in Sam Ash stores. Have retail sales taken off well?

A: There are now well over 30,000 Flukes and Fleas in the world with dealers in many countries. We also sell all of our products including Flukes and Fleas all over the world via the online store on fleamarketmusic.com.

Q: How many books, CDs and DVDs have you sold, thus far?

A: We've sold over 300,000 Jumpin' Jim's songbooks

worldwide. Our most recent *Blues Ukulele* songbook is the twentieth Jumpin' Jim's title. My book, *The Ukulele: A Visual History* is in its second edition and our DVDs have been consistent sellers. Lyle Ritz, the ukulele jazz master, has recorded two CDs for us (one with Herb Ohta) and both have sold very well. The new Jukebox section on our site where you can hear audio samples has helped to increase the visibility of all our releases as well as the CDs by others we sell in the online store.

Q: Did you ever think that you'd see the day when the ukulele would become as popular as it now has? In the beginning, you must have felt as though you were the only ukulele player in the world. How long did it take you to start meeting and playing with other people?

A: As a result of publishing the early *Jumpin' Jim's* songbooks other players began to find us. Their letters (this was just before the internet boom) were usually filled with the frustration of feeling like they were the only player around. Later we discovered very active, long established uke groups, especially in Southern California, that had been hiding in plain sight. One very important person I met early on was Chuck Fayne (at the Rose Bowl Flea Market --- probably eyeing the same uke). At the time Chuck had one of the most extensive collections of vintage ukes anywhere and eventually many of them ended up pictured in my *Visual History*

book. Even though he moved to Australia years ago Chuck still oversees the Uke Yak column on our site.

Q: FMM (bulletin board) has introduced a lot of newcomers to ukulele clubs and other players the world over. Did you envision this sort of success when you first started the site?

A: That was our hope from the beginning. If you look at the opening paragraph on the home page of the site, it's all about building a community. That was the thinking behind the BB and the Player Directory. The Player Directory was really born out of the desire for players to strum with other players in their area. It turns out that the ukulele is a very social instrument.

Q: Do you ever visit Ukulele Cosmos or other sites just to check what other people are doing?

A: Not as much as I probably should. I do keep an eye on our own BB although I haven't contributed to it more than twice. Once after 9/11 and once before we shut the BB down prior to bringing on Paul Cundari as moderator.

Q: How long was it before your lovely wife, Liz, got involved with your ukulele playing?

A: Liz has been an equal partner, although less visible, since day one. She named everything including Jumpin' Jim, Flea Market Music, Fluke, Flea, The Magic Fluke Co. and came up with our motto "*Uke*

Can Change The World." All of our songbooks and CDs feature her graphic design on the covers and the inside art. She started strumming with the introduction of the Flea, which was the perfect size for her. Mostly, though, she has a great singing voice and we have a lot of fun performing together.

Q: I hear so many nice things about you and Liz from people that have met you at the shows. Do you get to travel and visit clubs much, or is your activity pretty much confined to the big trade-shows and festivals?

A: In the early days we went to every uke event we could, both large and small. Now that we are living in Connecticut it's harder but we do try to attend major events on the east coast.

Q: What comes next? Any new album plans, DVDs, books or shows? How about the future for Flukes, Fleas, or other ukuleles, perhaps?

A: In 2009 we will be releasing a Lyle Ritz instructional DVD. This has been in the works for a while and Lyle gives up a lot of his techniques in the instructional portion. I also interviewed him for the DVD on his amazing career in music. Also, Liz and I have been working on a very ambitious songbook and hope to have it out in 2009.

The Magic Fluke Company will be introducing new Fluke and Flea designs coming out of the January NAMM trade show. Because songwriting is so important to me, I'm always

thinking about new CDs. There are a lot of songs I've written with both Herb Ohta and Lyle Ritz that I'd like to record.

Q: You have been given a lot of credit in the rise of ukulele popularity. At this point, most people agree that your name will long be remembered in the history of the ukulele and this wave of popularity. When did that hit you, or did it? Have you even thought about it?

A: That's a nice thing to say. I consider myself somewhat of a contrarian and early on I relished being a cheerleader for something that had fallen so far off the pop culture radar. Fortunately, we received a lot of positive encouragement along the way. Probably the biggest boost came from spending an afternoon with George Harrison at our home in LA. We spent the entire afternoon singing and strumming songs with George and his friend/luthier Danny Ferrington. After that experience I knew we were onto something. If the lead guitarist for the Beatles was so into the uke, I knew we were headed in the right direction. Now seeing how far this wave of interest has come, I do feel a certain satisfaction in knowing our instincts were right.

Thank You, Jumpin' Jim Beloff.
Thanks for taking the time to talk with us. I hope our readers enjoy this interview as much as I did. I look forward to seeing what you have in store for us.



60s Vintage Martin "0"

One of the great things about being involved in a ukulele club is getting your hands on other people's instruments. You get to test-drive lots of ukuleles that you would otherwise not have a chance to play.

JukeJeff, one of the founding members of COUP, Columbus Ohio Ukulele Peeps, has a pretty nice collection of ukes old and new. Since I no longer have a vintage Martin lying around, he was kind enough to loan me his sixties vintage Martin "0" soprano ukulele for this review. In fact, Jeff suggested it.

I reviewed the Martin S-0 in the last issue. The S-0 is built from the same blueprint as the vintage "0" models. Like the S-0, the Martin "0" body is solid mahogany from tip of the headstock to the very bottom of the lower bout. There is no binding, no inlay other than the dots in the neck. The fret board is rosewood. This specimen has the original friction tuners.

If you compare the sound this little "0" produces with that of the S-0, well, really, there is a huge difference. That's not to say that the S-0 is substandard, but a vintage "0" has had plenty of time to "open up" and solid

mahogany Martin ukuleles, like Martin solid mahogany guitars, just keep getting better with age.

Jeff put fluorocarbon strings on his "0" and they really give this tiny ukulele amazing volume. I noticed that the tone is brighter than with Nylguts. There is little bass tone coming from the uke with these strings. My old vintage Martin had Nylguts on it before I sold it and it had a fatter sound, but less volume. The S-0 I had was fitted with Martin clear strings and it had a balanced tone, but, it could never match the volume of this vintage uke.

Like most vintage ukuleles, there is a little wear on the surface, but, there are no cracks. There is one small dent at the bottom of the lower bout, so, the uke's structural integrity is perfect. Had there ever been a crack and repair in the top, for example, the ukulele would not be as loud and clear as it is. This is a perfect specimen to use for a review because you can hear what a well-made and well-kept ukulele can be.

If you were in the market for a Martin vintage "0" soprano ukulele, this is a prime



conditioned instrument and the type you'd want to find. It is a solid performer.

The original owner kept it in great shape, but, it was played. There are lots of very fine surface scratches in the finish, but, no damage to the mahogany top.

There are lots of Martin vintage ukuleles out there. For many years, every serious player wanted one. Most you find in flea markets or up for sale have repaired cracks in them. Finding one in this fine condition is very rare.

Playing this ukulele, what really strikes me is just how loud it is. This is the loudest soprano ukulele I have ever played. I am not sure how much credit goes to the strings, but, I can tell you this, if I had one of these in this condition in my collection, I would never part with it. Jeff, you have a winner.



DeChirico Street Craig Robertson's Latest CD

DeChirico Street is the latest CD from tunesmith Craig Robertson. This album has thirteen songs to stir your soul and give you something to ponder.

Here's the song lineup:

1. The Leopard
2. Frontporch
3. You Can't Stay Here
4. Bea-fucking-utiful
5. Even Stephen
6. Higher Heels
7. Goodbye Paul Tibbets
8. Nicotine
9. Hard
10. The Gate
11. Sparrow caught in the Thorns
12. The Dark Derby
13. The Big Nowhere

There is a "warning" about adult language and situations on the back cover.

"The Leopard" is a song about superficial changes, perhaps outward appearances, but, in the end, it's the same old thing.

"Frontporch" had me laughing at least a couple of times. I can relate to kicking back and watching the world go on its way. You can hear Craig on slide guitar in this tune. Craig,

your second verse is my favorite.

You Can't Stay Here... This scene plays out nightly in every city in the world. Perhaps, it is a social commentary. The intro is sweet. It starts with slide guitar and goes into Craig's trademark growl. You can picture a smoke filled bar like something from an old classic Bogart film. Play IT Again Sam.

The fourth track should have come third, before the last track, because I'd bet that scenario more than likely plays out in reverse order more times than not.

"Even Stephen" sounds like an old folk song. It is as though Craig waltzes back in time to the mid nineteenth century. This is a unique song in that it is nothing like anything I've heard Craig play before.

"Higher Heels" reminds me of "Bell Book and Candle", the movie starring Jack Lemmon, Jimmy Stewart, and beautiful Kim Novak. I picture the beatnik club scene.

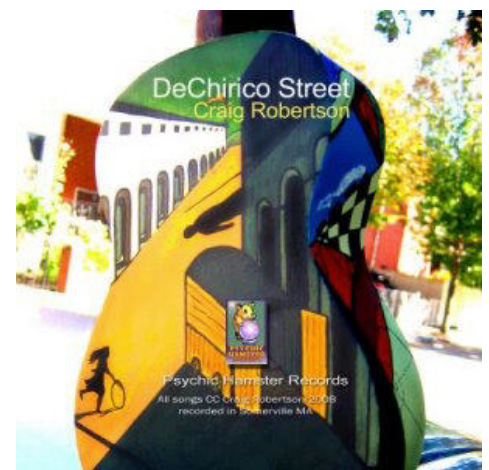
"Goodbye Paul Tibbets", from

the Enola Gay crew that dropped the "bomb" on Hiroshima, Japan. It is a profound song, and will give you something to think about long after the music stops.

"Nicotine" is another song that belongs in another era. I picture Mae West and gin joints. Followed by "Hard", Craig seems to take you into vintage Hollywood once again. "You'll always be second" if he's a musician. I have seen this so many times.

"The Gate" and "The Sparrow Caught in the Thorns" are about fate and circumstance. The roles are interchangeable. The "Dark Derby" reminds me of a Stephen King novel. The Big Nowhere is a song I have heard live. Craig seems to sum up all of the tunes from Nicotine to Dark Derby in this last track. The Japanese Zen Master would say it is bowing to the inevitable, but life goes on.

You'll want to listen to this album more than once to soak it all in. Musically, it is dynamic, lyrically, it is powerful.



<http://psychichamster.com/>



Pete Howlett

UK-UKES

Pete Howlett is a luthier based in England. He has built traditional soprano, concert, and tenor ukes and solid-bodied electrics as well.

Several members of the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain have invested in Pete's ukuleles giving him lots of notoriety among UK ukulele enthusiasts.

One somewhat unique body-style that Pete produces is a "dreadnaught" body (pictured below). This is an acoustic guitar shape known for booming bass and fullness of tone in the guitar world. In a ukulele, the larger dreadnaught style produces a fuller sound without the "depth" of a guitar. It is a great body style for singer-songwriters.

I wanted to interview Pete for this issue of ukulele player for several reasons but first and foremost is the fact that he produces some of the finest ukuleles available anywhere.

Q: UK Ukes Pete Howlett: How long have you been making ukuleles?

A: I started building ukulele in 1994

Q: What inspired you to begun making ukuleles in the beginning?

A: I won a bursary to attend and market guitars at the Arlington guitar show. Opposite me on the first date was Collier Thelen, owner of Music Exchange in Hilo. I had a Terz guitar which Breezy Ridge later marketed for me that Collier liked and he asked if I could build ukulele. I agreed to meet 4 months later for the next show and he presented me with a Kamaka 8 string and 6 string to measure and make. He sent me 24 sets of curly koa and the rest is history with me making about 8 ukulele a month for the next 30 months...

Q: How many ukuleles have you built to date?

A: I've built about 400 ukulele but as I don't number them I can't be too sure. It's not important. I haven't reached perfection yet so I just gotta keep going!

Q: I know that you have had a bit of a backlog, how long will someone have to currently wait to receive a ukulele once ordered?

A: Since I've gone full time again the waiting list is currently three to six months although circumstances change very quickly. I have had three orders come in this month that require a six-week turn round so I have to re-work the due dates of others. The great thing is that existing clients are very patient with me.

Q: Do you keep stock on hand?

A: I have a huge stock of wood and parts but rarely keep instruments in stock. If I do have any spare capacity I offer it through Cosmos or my website (sorry folks, no cheap deals through eBay but you can always phone to see what I have). For the very first time ever I have had cancellations this year so you never know.



Q: What woods, binding, and other features are available? What sizes?

A: Most people want a ukulele in koa or mahogany so I have about 500 sets of this stuff. I bought the koa a couple of years ago before it became really expensive and all the mahogany is pre CITES. Most of the wide boards for my one piece fronts and backs are re-sawn by a lovely guy in California, David Borson. His setup provides a high yield and the odd stick I buy off eBay goes right to him and when he has a box load, he ships them back to me.

I use fibre purflin and plastic binding. I know this sounds an odd combination but I think that plastic has a great resilience. I like the look of wood binding and used to use it on my guitars but for ukulele I just love plastic especially faux tortoise and ivoroid!

I make everything from sopranos to baritones and use the standard sizes found in Mike Longworth's Martin History book. I am however currently refining body depths, reducing them slightly.

I'd love to be able to supply good quality cases but can't find any. I understand the problems in this area since there is not much money to be made in cases...

Q: What price range are your instruments?

A: My instruments start at \$895

and go beyond... what can I say? If you want a 5k treatment then we are looking at \$3000 and more.

[Note: The 5k treatment refers to the inlay and extra cosmetic work that Martin pours into their 5k ukulele]

Q: I have heard wonderful things about your ukuleles and I have watched your videos. Have your videos increased sales?

A: I'm not sure. I started the videos because I wanted to dispel some of the myth making that goes on by well meaning enthusiasts. It's been a bit like Topsy and I'm now up to sixty videos. I think I have made six sales or so from them this year so a big thanks to all my subscribers and fans who have made that leap and bought from me. Best experience this year was Sam Bowen's extreme build. I now know it is possible to build a ukulele from a kit with a student in my workshop in 15 hours!

Q: You have built instruments for some members of the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain. Have you sold any ukuleles to "celebrity players" and if so, who?

A: When I went to live in America, Andy Fairweatherlow, Clapton's guitarist acted as a referee for me so he has one. Craig Robertson has one specially made and badged with his label design called Le Noir and I am building a concert harp uke for Muriel

Anderson. Steven Sproat will shortly be getting a Cherryele – goodness knows who has my 'Hawaiian' ukes. I'm not star struck. In truth, this side of the business isn't important to me. Making a pair of ukes for a husband and wife team who love playing music together, as I am currently doing, is as rewarding as having a celebrity playing one of my instruments.

Q: With koa becoming scarce, I know that you and other luthiers are beginning to offer "locally available" tone-woods in place of the exotics. How has that been received?

A: I was thrilled when I saw the light and started building in local woods. I found local wood yard and bought some UK timbers off eBay. Mike King traded some laburnum so I have been able to build my first all indigenous uke. Called the Cherryele for obvious reasons it is as good a koa – a huge surprise. It had the approval of Rufus so I suppose we are good to go with this wood for sopranos. I have a commission for a concert in Cherry and a tenor in English yew. These instruments should confirm this timber's place in my palette of woods.

Q: You made a video with your "sharp guitar" and posted it on Cosmos. Have you made many guitars? If so, did you build them with truss rods?

A: Big question. I started out building guitars and made about one-hundred, with fifty of those going to Shiro Arai in

Japan. I used conventional building techniques, bolt on necks and truss rods but experimented with harp guitars, ladder braced instruments and reproduction instruments like Stella twelve- strings. There are also about twenty-five Weissenborn guitars with my name on them out there...

Q: Have you offered ukuleles with electronics? If so, what type of electronics, passive or active, brand, etc...

A: I do the passive pickup thing for acoustic ukulele but really do not like adding active electronics and stuff. I like the acoustic look and sound. However, I have a range of electric ukulele based around my acoustic shapes called Uklectic™. These are great instruments fitted with passive or active electronics. I'm also at the end stage of developing a cool Uklectic™ called Uklectic Firefly™ which will have active circuitry.

[We knew about the Uklectic ukes and they are loved by those lucky folks who have managed to get one]

Q: Rumors circulated recently that due to health issues, you might be cutting back on building or not taking "orders" on custom-made ukes. Is that true? If so, are you still planning to build ukes in limited numbers?

A: 2008 was a tough year for me and I thought I'd be cutting back. However things got a lot better in the Fall and now I am building full time again but not

yet at full capacity. I will always accept commissions – it's a great opportunity to indulge yourself and your clients. And yes, I will build limited editions, not numbers. The reason for this is I have matched sets of koa and since the Helsinki limited edition was such a success, thought I would develop the idea of ukes made from one board as it were.

Q: You're an excellent player. Have you made an album or thought about making one?

A: I have never considered myself a ukulele player so it is very kind of you to say so. It's stressful enough making ukuleles, making an album? I'll leave that to others far more talented than me to do so.

Q: If you did do an album, would it be blues? jazz? what genre?

A: Definitely blues – I've been fooling with this genre for forty years now and don't know how to play anything else!

Q: Do you plan, at some point, to retire from building?

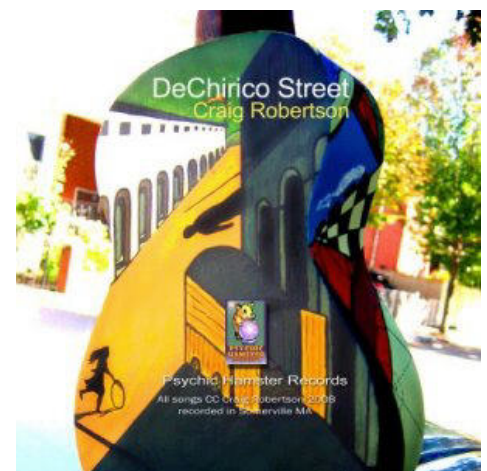
A: No I don't. It is one way I can glorify God and seek his

perfection in using the most wonderful natural material on this earth. Who would want to retire from the best job ever?

We hope to see Pete making ukuleles for many years to come. Thanks for the interview Pete.



<http://www.ukulelenoir.com/>



<http://psychichamster.com/>



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This issue: Microphones

When it comes to recording, a lot of people ignore the obvious. I refer to the humble microphone.

Multi-track recorders get most of the attention these days. People spend top dollar on a digital record or a DAW (digital audio workstation) and then they use poor quality mics. When they listen to their work, they are disappointed with the results.

Right now, it is a buyer's market when it comes to microphones. There are lots of great mics available at very low prices compared to just a few short years ago.



Left: CAD-M177 Right: Shure SM57

I wanted to feature a couple of mics in this article to give you a general direction if you'd like to start recording or simply upgrade the equipment you are now using.

The CAD-M177 is an excellent microphone for home studio recording. You can buy one from Musician's Friend for \$169 at the time of this writing.

The CAD-M177 is a large membrane condenser mic that has great dynamic range and fantastic clarity. It is also highly directional, so it is easy to avoid capturing all sorts of background noise when you record, just face the mic away from the source of noise.

The CAD-M177 is a great vocal mic, but it is also a fantastic mic for recording ukulele tracks. It has been optimized for "natural voice" and that makes it perfect for acoustic instrument recording, too. Be aware, though, that the microphone uses "phantom power" to work, thus, you will need either a mixing board that supplies phantom power (like last issue's Behringer UB1202) or you will need a microphone pre-amp that has phantom power, like the little Art Amp.

There might be times when the CAD-M177 is too hot (recording an amplifier, for example, or a very strong winded vocalist). It's those times when an alternative is good. For the most part, though, ukulele players will do well with any CAD condenser mic as long as they are multi-tracking, they can record using this one mic.

If you want to fatten your ukulele sound, an additional mic pointed at the bridge would give you more sound without multiple ukulele tracks. A great little trick, then, is to use the condenser placed where you would normally put a vocal mic, then place a Shure SM57 pointed at the saddle on your ukulele. The condenser will catch the vocals and some of the ukulele while the SM57 will catch most of the ukulele with a tiny bit of vocals in the mix.

Computers make lots of noise. Between cooling fans on CPUs, in the cases, and in power supplies, they generate a lot of background buzz that you don't notice until you hear the final mix of your recordings. For that reason, I prefer digital recorders over recording on computers. Multi-track recording requires FULL-DUPLEX hardware supported sound cards. Most computers use software emulation and that won't cut it. Even Sound Blaster cards, as popular as they are, make poor recording equipment when it comes to simultaneous recording and playback.

Recording is much easier with a dedicated multi-track unit.



Ohana SK-50WG

What a beautiful Ukulele

Ask most experienced ukulele players the difference between solid wood and laminated ukes and they will usually tell you that if you want performance, all solid wood ukuleles would win every time.

It was not all that long ago that solid wood instruments were very expensive and hard to find. Ohana Ukuleles, a family-run ukulele manufacturer has been working hard to change that by bringing great-playing, high quality ukes to the market at prices that will not put you in the poor house.

One such ukulele is Ohana's new SK-50WG, a solid-cedar topped ukulele with "willow wood" back and sides. This soprano features elegant inlay that looks classy and goes beautifully with the finely grained cedar. The high-gloss finish is very evenly applied and doesn't make the ukulele appear as if it were dipped in a vat of polyurethane like some competing manufacturers ukes.

Everything about this ukulele from the tip of its headstock to the bottom of its lower bout just says "class".

Shipped from Ohana with Aquila Nyl-Guts, I tuned the uke and started playing it a bit to break-in the strings. It was not long before it stayed in tune for extended periods of time.

I really like Aquila strings anyway, but having a ukulele that stays in tune in a few short minutes is a pleasure. With these strings, not only did the uke stay in tune in a short amount of play time, but it sounded fantastic.

This instrument's voice is sweet. It is loud, but not harsh. The tone is soft when strummed lightly and boisterous when you really want to liven things up a bit. The dynamic range is great.

Finger-picking with this ukulele is a pleasure. I found its tone was very warm, but it was balanced well from the highest notes to the lowest, and the intonation was excellent. The neck felt comfortable all the way to the body and did not feel cramped.

The bridge on this uke is unique in that I have not seen other Ohana ukes with this same design. It is interesting and well made. It is very sturdy and looks



nice. You get the impression that this ukulele was built to last, but it is not over-built. It is solid, yet light weight. A lot of design experience went into this little gem. From the choice of tone-woods to the inlay, the friction tuners to the choice of strings, this ukulele is a players dream.

If you want a beautiful ukulele with warm wonderful tone, look

no further.

Cedar tops are sweet sounding and just get better with age. In this case, the woodgrain is flawless and trimmed with a binding that is both flattering and subtle. As I said before, everything about this instrument says "class".

The willow wood is "curly" and book-matched. It has a rich almost koa tone to it, but the texture is one of the most interesting I have seen in any musical instrument. The ukulele's high-gloss finish is smooth as glass, but there doesn't appear to be any filler in the grain. I can only attribute that to the choice of wood, and if that is the case, I'd expect other companies to start using willow to compete.

Making beautiful music is your passion, helping you do it is ours.



This is a new model and is not yet available, but I did find it on Elderly Instrument's website. They did not post an arrival date.

You can expect to see this sweet little player at NAMM, so make your way to Ohana's booth and give this baby a test drive. You will be glad that you did and if you have the chance to buy one on the spot... don't pass up the opportunity. This is the nicest new uke I have seen

in a while. While you are at the Ohana booth at NAMM, check out the new SK-50MG soprano with its flamed mahogany back and sides.

The way that cedar ages, I can't wait to hear these ukuleles as they mature.

Ohana has a winner here. Get yours while you can. I'd bet they will be in big demand very soon.





the Barnkickers

There are a lot of "family" music acts out there. Most of them seem to come from the world of "bluegrass", gospel, or traditional Irish folk players.

When an act comes along that plays a lot of original tunes and has real stage presence, I take notice. One act that caught my eye a while ago is the "Barnkickers", a father and daughter team with great performance skills, excellent musicianship, and charm.

Craig Robertson encouraged them to contact me and talk about a feature in the magazine and I was really glad he did. I had already known of the Barnkickers, but it might have been quite a while before I contacted them if not for Craig. The timing couldn't be better, however, because it just so happens that the duo is just getting ready to release a new CD of original tunes and I can't wait to hear it. I'll be reviewing it soon.

Thanks to Craig's recommendation, I had a chance to interview Steve Boisen, one half of this father and daughter team and I come away feeling excited for them and looking forward to watching them grow

musically. I can't wait to hear the new CD and I expect to see a lot more of them in the future.

Q: The Barnkickers is a father and daughter act. How long have you been playing music together? I know "Steve" is your name, and what is your daughter's name?

A: Her first name is Amanda and her middle name is Lynn (a mandolin) so I guess she was destined to become a musician. We have been playing music together and making homemade music videos since she was a little girl,

maybe ten or eleven years.

Q: When did you decide to actually become an "act"?

A: It was in December of 2007 that we entered the Bushman Ukulele Video Contest that we actually became known as "The Barnkickers". We decided to use a ukulele and wear vintage style clothing for the video and it caught on. Since Amanda and I both write original music and play other instruments we added those elements to come up with a sound to fit the image we had created.

Q: Why the "Barnkickers"?

A: Amanda listed "barn kicker" as her occupation on her MySpace page because she actually toppled a neighbor's dilapidated barn when she kicked it. I found this amusing and suggested that we use it for a band name. I later discovered that "barn kicker" is



an actual term. President Clinton used it in a speech once.

Q: I see you both playing multiple instruments. Which instruments do you play?

A: We both play ukulele and guitar. I also play upright bass and Amanda plays clarinet. I made my living as a professional bassist at one time and Amanda is the president of her schools marching band where she is the leader of the clarinet section. We both got bitten by the ukulele bug so that's an indispensable part of our sound too. I wish I had discovered its charms when I was her age.

Q: You are about to release an album, was it recorded in a studio or at home? If a studio, which one? If home, what equipment did you use?

A: It was recorded at home using a pretty low-tech set up. I recorded everything using a Tascam DP-01 digital portastudio and a Rode NT1-A condenser microphone. I then mixed the tracks on my home computer using Audacity which is a freeware audio editor. I am having the tracks professionally mastered.

Q: Coming from a musical family myself, I know how much fun it is to make music with your own family members. Was this something you did at family events?

A: Occasionally. My father and uncle were also musicians and

my brother was a successful composer and record producer when he lived in Taiwan. He plays piano and he I usually perform together when he is in town.

Q: You interact extremely well together and it's obvious that you are having a lot of fun with the videos you have posted online. Is this something that will be part of your "act" in live performances? Will you continue to put that sort of energy into subsequent videos?

A: While we do plan on making more videos, live performances are infrequent because of Amanda's schedule. She is in her senior year of high school and making plans for college so I don't think that will change anytime soon. I know people like seeing the father-daughter relationship and the humor in our videos so we will continue to feature this aspect, even in the CD artwork and some of the lyrics to our songs.

Q: Is what we are seeing here the start of a career in music, or just a hobby that you are hoping pays for itself? I ask this because I see your act as having a charm about it that I just love. I can see you both enjoying future success.

A: Thank you. I actually did play music for a living at one time, but now it's a hobby and part-time job for me. Amanda plans on pursuing a career in music which will be her major in college. If the Barnkickers leads to other opportunities for us that would be great but that's not

the reason we started this project. I see it as an extension of what we've always done: singing and playing music together. It is rewarding to know that other people derive pleasure from our music and I think it's a nice confidence booster for Amanda. She's become something of a local celebrity at her school. It's strange when her teachers tell her that they love watching her sing on YouTube!

Q: What are your ages?

A: Amanda is seventeen. I won't divulge my age, but I turned twenty-four the week she was born.

Q: Do you envision always being an "act" together or do you see the day that your daughter gets a record deal and pursues it on her own? Would you become manager if that happens?

A: I know that Amanda's voice and charisma are a big part of the Barnkickers appeal and she has musical interests and aspirations outside of what we do together. If she became successful on her own that would be wonderful.

While I would hope she would seek my advice, I would imagine it would be hard to have one of her parents also serve as her manager. You hear so many negative stories about that sort of thing. Maybe she'd record one of my songs or hire me to play bass in her road band. That's one way to get a gig.



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The Barnkickers continued...

Q: Are you "signed" with a record label?

A: No, we've been doing everything on our own. Our song "One Less Tear" was included on a compilation CD and this led to Amanda being invited to appear on a radio show here in Florida. On March 17 at 6 pm she will be the musical guest on WSLR 96.5 FM in Sarasota and they will be playing some tracks from our CD.

You can listen at this URL:

<http://www.wslr.org>

Q: What are you hoping the future brings?

A: While it's fun to imagine this leading to further recognition or success we really don't have big aspirations beyond producing our CD and sharing some music with our family, friends and the supportive ukulele community that we seem to have tapped into. The Barnkickers came about very naturally and I think that accounts for some of the attention we've gotten so far. It's not something we hang our hopes, but if other opportunities arise we'd be open to them.

Thanks for the interview, Steve.

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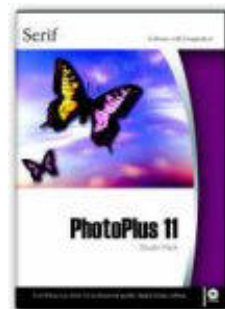


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UkeLadyMusic.com

Many first-time ukulele buyers will go to a music superstore like Sam Ash or Guitar Center for their first ukulele. Little do they know that a ukulele is not a baby guitar. Sure they look like pint-sized guitars and baritone ukes are even tuned like guitars, but ukuleles and guitars are vastly different in many ways.

That is why at **ukulele player** we support the small shopkeepers and recommend them. In this issue, we are introducing a new feature, a retailer spotlight. If you have not already guessed it, we are featuring Noel Tardy, and UkeLadyMusic, her shop.

Noel is passionate about ukulele. She has been running her little store for five years. A first-time ukulele buyer will find that she is eager to share a wealth of information about her favorite subject, ukulele.

UkeLadyMusic is owned and operated with the "Spirit of Aloha" and Noel sees all ukulele enthusiasts as family, ohana in the language of Hawaii.

To help new-comers to the ukulele scene, Noel offers classes and workshops, some of which have celebrity players. She is a founding member of a

ukulele club that meets on a regular basis. They play all sorts of classic tunes and Hawaiian favorites as well.

Noel even entertains various groups in Texas when she is not helping people in her shop. She even played at a benefit for the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

When you talk with Noel Tardy about buying a ukulele, you don't feel as though you are being given the old "hard-sell" routine. In fact, it is evident that you are speaking with someone who lives her passion every day. Noel loves the ukulele and is eager to show you why. She'll go the extra mile to help you pick the right instrument for your needs. She'll even teach you how to play it in one of her many classes or workshops.

The shop features KoAloha ukuleles along with Fleas, Flukes, Johnson ukes, the full line of Kala, Ohana, and Kanile'a (including the "Sound Monster").

What is really wonderful about UkeLadyMusic is that you will find everything from the modestly priced Johnson ukes to the custom-built Kanile'a models available to you. You can choose from a huge supply of



ukuleles in any price-range imaginable.

The shop carries the full-line of Kala ukes which include inexpensive laminated models and an assortment of solid wood instruments for the discriminating player. Available in all sizes, Ohana ukes are made from classic tone woods like mahogany, willow, koa, cedar, and spruce.

KoAloha ukes are made in Hawaii and really sound great! You'll get that genuine Koa sound of Hawaiian ukuleles. You can choose from soprano, concert, or long-necked models and pineapple ukes.

There are ukuleles at UkeLadyMusic.com for every budget, but, the best thing is that Noel Tardy is eager to help you pick the right ukulele for you whatever you can afford. Again, there's no hard-sell here, just the UkeLady spreading that uke love around.

Check out UkeLadyMusic online: <http://www.ukeladymusic.com>

You can shop online, see the advertisement in this magazine.



Kala KA-KC-TCE

As part of the retailer spotlight, we arranged for a shipment from UkeLadyMusic. Noel Tardy sent us this wonderful new Kala ukulele to review.

The Kala KA-KC-TCE is a tenor ukulele with a solid cedar top, laminated koa back and sides, maple binding, and sporting geared tuners.

First off, this is a beautiful instrument and Noel had it lovingly packed in a sturdy carton stuffed with foam peanuts. The ukulele itself was covered in heavy bubble-wrap. It arrived in perfect condition.

This ukulele has great balance. The geared tuners do not make it top-heavy. The neck is rounded and comfortable in my hand and the frets are dressed perfectly. Intonation is great all the way up the neck.

This particular model has a cut-away to give the player access to the top frets on the neck. String tension is higher on a tenor than it is on concert or soprano ukuleles. It takes a little more finger pressure to play tenors. This particular specimen has a perfect neck and is easy to play, even though it is narrower than other tenors I

have played.

The "Shadow" pickup is an active electronic model and has a battery concealed in a small compartment that is very cleverly designed. It features tone and volume controls.

These are relatively inactive *active electronics*. In my mind, that is a good thing. Too much shift in tone control would ruin an otherwise great sounding instrument. In this case, what change in tone occurs from one end of the dial to the other is very subtle. The volume control has much broader range, but if you use this ukulele for recording, just remember that a little volume increase goes a long way.

Listening to the sound I get from this ukulele in my recording studio, I am impressed. This uke sounds great plugged-in. It sounds sweet played tenderly and really has some bite when you strum it hard. This is one punchy ukulele.

The Kala KA-KC-TCE is a nice ukulele at a downright affordable price. It is a little quieter than an all solid-wood uke, but, it has great tone both plugged and unplugged.



If you are looking for a ukulele for live performances and recording, this is one to consider. It looks beautiful, sounds great, and is a fantastic value for the street price.

Call Noel Tardy for the latest prices and availability.

UkeLadyMusic (214) 924-0408
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Ukulele in Ireland

by Charlie Connelly

When you think of Ireland, what's the first thing that comes to mind? Well, ok, apart from Guinness. And whiskey. Yes, and apart from red-haired colleens throwing smouldering, coquettish "come hither" glances over their shoulders, too. Oh come on, music must be up there somewhere, mustn't it?

Music is an important and popular part of Irish culture. The place is riddled with the stuff. When last summer I moved here from the UK, where there is already a burgeoning ukulele scene, I expected to find similar if not more in Ireland. To my surprise, there was practically no uke action to speak of. Music shops would look at you askance if you asked for one and try to sell you a cheap bodhran with fake celtic

symbols on it instead. Tell someone in Ireland you played the ukulele and they'd look at you as if you'd just mooted the flooding of O'Connell Street in order to breed dugongs. There were no clubs, no gatherings, and, as far as I could tell, no ukulele players at all in the entire country. For once, uniquely, Ireland was musically backward.

Thank heavens, then, for Tony Boland. A former television producer and recently converted ukevangelist, Tony spent the first part of 2008 tirelessly scouring the country for fellow converts, trawling message boards and standing atop the Wicklow mountains hollering through cupped hands, until, in August of last year, the first gathering took place in a large Georgian building in the south of Dublin.



Around a dozen folk from across the country emerged nervously into the room, wide-eyed and open-mouthed at the newly-acquired knowledge that they weren't ploughing a lonely furrow after all. The day was hosted by Cool Hand Uke, Dan Scanlan, and it was he who coined the term 'Ukuhooley' for our monthly gatherings, making us individually 'ukuhooligans'.

Only a few months on our numbers have grown considerably. Curiously for a nation traditionally associated with emigration we're a cosmopolitan bunch. We've regular attendees hailing originally from Korea, the Netherlands, the Basque Country, Newfoundland and Scotland as well as folk travelling great distances from some remote parts of Ireland. We've also branched out into an additional monthly pub session at a Dublin city centre hostelry.

The UK's Stephen Sproat came over and gave a hugely popular and well-received workshop and there is even hushed and furtive talk of a possible Dublin Ukulele Festival later this year.

Ireland was a little slow to join the ukulele revolution, but we've



Ireland's Own Ukehooleys

caught up fast. Music shops here are now stocking a range of ukes and a number of excellent performers are emerging into the limelight, such as Peter Delaney from Limerick and Angie McLaughlan of the popular Dublin band The Sick And Indigent Song Club. The ukulele has not yet supplanted the fiddle, guitar and whistle in the Irish subconscious, but, largely

thanks to the tireless work of Tony Boland, the surge in its popularity appears to be relentless.

There are many dogs in Ireland, but only the best of them have fleas,' as the old Irish proverb goes. Actually, I just made that up, but it sounds quite good.

Ukulele Ireland Blog: <http://ukulele-ireland.blogspot.com>

Peter Delaney: <http://www.myspace.com/peterdelaney>

Sick & Indigent Song club: <http://www.myspace.com/sickandindigentsongclub>



Above: Sainte! Drink to your health, and here's a fine tune from the lad himself, Charlie Connelly, in the spirit of Erin's Green Aisle.

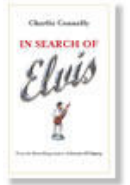
Charlie Connelly is a best-selling author currently living in Ireland. He has been playing ukulele passionately for some time and is a frequent contributor on Ukulele Cosmos and the Ukulele-Ireland Blog.

Charlie's latest book, [In Search of Elvis: A Journey to Find the Man Beneath the Jumpsuit](#) is available at

Amazon.co.uk and you can read more about this and his other books, including his best-seller,

[Attention All Shipping: A Journey Round the Shipping Forecast](#) at his website:

<http://www.charlieconnelly.com>



Publisher's note: Ukulele is a great instrument for playing traditional Irish pub songs. If you listen to the Clancy Brothers or other Irish bands of the past, you will find an endless supply of tunes to enjoy with family and friends.

Irish pub songs are lyrical in nature and many times are written about an Irishman's two favorite subjects, Irish Women and Irish Whiskey. Oh, but there are plenty of songs about a good mug of ale, too.

I recommend "Jug of Punch" for your ukulele club sing-a-long. The last song of the night, of course, is "The Parting Glass" and no pub night is the same without it.

Sainte!

ukulele player presents...

the great Kala ukulele give-a-way

ukulele player, UkeLadyMusic, and Kala Ukuleles came together to bring you this exciting opportunity. One lucky reader will win this ukulele.

All you have to do is submit your name, an e-mail address, and a shipping address so that if you are the winner, we will be able to ship it to you. You only need to submit your information one time and you will be in the running for all of the Kala Ukulele give-a-ways.

You read about UkeLadyMusic. You read about this actual ukulele in this issue of **ukulele player**, now, here is your chance to win. Follow the instructions below...

note: if you have trouble with the form, e-mail your entry to giveaway@tricornpublications.com



Go to this website and fill in the form and click the submit button for your CHANCE to win. There is no purchase necessary. One submission per person will be counted. The lucky winner will be drawn from a hat on the 24th of January and the winner will be announced on Ukulele-Cosmos, Ukulele Underground, and Flea Market Music.

http://www.tricornpublications.com/uke_contest.htm

Thanks for reading **ukulele player**. Thank You UkeLadyMusic and thanks to Kala Ukuleles for their support.



Ukulele Club Listings...

If you would like to list your club here, submit contact information at this website:

http://www.tricornpublications.com/uke_player.htm
 or e-mail me at this address:
mickey@tricornpublications.com
 We will add you to our list.

USA

California

Nuked Ukes

We are in Auburn California. Welcoming players from all levels.
 contact: Loyce Smallwood
loy@foothill.net
www.kahi.com/loyce'sblog

Connecticut

The Ukulele Club of Southern Connecticut and the KookeeUkie Ukulele Band.

We welcome players of all skill levels and offer classes for those new to the ukulele. Check our web site at
<http://www.orgsites.com/ct/uke-club/index.html>.
 Pete Johnson
 email=petejhnsn@sbcglobal.net

Florida

Tampa Bay Ukulele Society
www.meetup.com/tampabayukes

Each meeting will start with a group lesson followed by an informal jam session for players of all levels. Everyone gets a chance to call a few tunes.

Kansas (and Western Missouri)

Kansas City Ukesters
<http://www.kcuks.com>

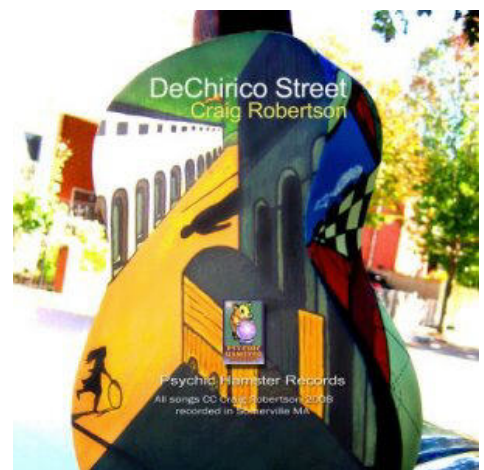
New Mexico



<http://www.wsukes.com>



<http://www.ukulelenoir.com/>



<http://psychichamster.com/>

Ukulele Clubs continued

The High Desert Sand Fleas

Meet the 2nd & 4th Thursday of each month at the
Albuquerque Press Club [6pm - 9pm]
2101 Highland Park Circle
Albuquerque, New Mexico - USA
contact: Stephen Hunt
email: hdsfgcea@gmail.com.
<http://sites.google.com/site/hdsfgcea/>

Ohio

COUP (Central Ohio Ukulele Peeps)
coup@tricornpublications.com

Texas

Robert S. Sparkman
sparky.judy@tx.rr.com

Lone Star Ukulele Club (in North Dallas)
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lonestarukuleles>

The Dallas Ukulele Headquarters
Go to www.meetup.com and search The
Dallas Ukulele Headquarters to join the group. Lots of fun events and jams!

CHUG - Coffee House Ukulele Gang
Fort Worth, Texas

Brief: This wild west group of uke enthusiasts meets the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month.

Contact Steve for more info. (steve_w_williams@yahoo.com)

Vermont

Vermont Ukulele Society
email: vyhna@sover.net
Meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month.

Washington

Seattle Ukulele Players Association (SUPA)
www.seattleukulele.org/

UK

England

Ukulele Society of Great Britain

Ukulele Clubs continued

43 Finstock Road, London W10 6LU
Tel: 020 8960 0459
Email: m@gicman.com

Cambridge Ukulele Co-operative [Cuckoo]

Meet alternate Sundays 2pm-6pm
The Portland Arms Cambridge CB4 3BA
If you're cuckoo about ukes come and join us.
<http://www.myspace.com/cambridgeukuleleclub>

Ukulele Philharmonic Orchestra of Sudbury

Tuesdays evenings from 7.00pm
The Institute, Station Road, Sudbury Suffolk CO10 2SP
Beginners Welcome

Uke Wednesday Jam

Every Wednesday 7 till closing
Downstairs @ The Royal George
Charing Cross Road, London, WC2H 0EA, U.K.
contact: Quinc
email: qnc@qnctv.com
<http://ukeweds.intodit.com>

SCUPA - Second City Ukulele Players Association

Venue: The Camp Inn, 1 Camp Lane, Kings Norton, Birmingham
West Midlands B38 8SP

Details: We aim to accommodate beginners as well as more experienced players, playing popular songs both old and new on figure-of-eight ukuleles. We meet weekly on Tuesdays at 7:30pm in the upstairs room at The Camp Inn.

Call or text Jon 0787 353 1161 or email:
jay.eyeb@bigfoot.com for more information.

Whickham & District Social Club

Simonside View, Whickham, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE16 4AQ.
We meet every 2nd Wednesday 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM.
<http://tunearmy.blogspot.com/>

UkeGlos Ukulele Club

Meets on first & third Mondays every month, 8.00pm at The Strand Wine Bar,
40 High St, Cheltenham, Glos.

Wooden & banjo ukes welcome. All levels of playing ability & song styles. For full details visit: www.ukeglos.co.uk
<http://www.ukeglos.co.uk>

Ukulele Clubs continued

Ireland

UKULELE IRELAND

ukulele@ireland.com

Irish ukulele club meets on the second saturday of each month. Players from all over Ireland. Ukeplayers of all levels welcome. If you are a visiting uke player please feel free to come along. The meetups are held at 2, eden park, Dunlaoire, Co. Dublin

South Wales

Ukulele Nights

meet on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of every month at 8.30pm.
The Albion, Glebe Street, Penarth, Vale of Glamorgan, South Wales

Contact: Sarah Thomas: sarahredsedge@yahoo.co.uk.

Blog: www.ukenights.blogspot.com

(for songbooks, directions and more. Beginners very welcome)

Germany

Ukulele Club of Germany

info@ukulelenclub.de

www.ukulelenclub.de (home page)

www.ukulelenboard.de (message board)

Holland

Ukulele Jamboree in Rotterdam - hosted by 'The Uke Box'

The night is comprised of a workshop, performances & open mic.

To Join the Mailing List send an e-mail to: guaranteed2swoon@gmail.com

To read more about this and our other ukulele projects go to:

<http://www.ukulele-interventie.blogspot.com> (Dutch)

Visit my personal blog spot and click on 'Ukulele' under "Contents" (English) <http://www.shelleyrickey.blogspot.com>

Note: Shelley has an Etsy store where you can find ukulele related items for sale, check it out: <http://www.thejumpingfleamarket.etsy.com>



USA

Lone Star Ukulele Festival

dates are 4/30-5/2 in Dallas

UkeLadyMusic and The Dallas Ukulele Headquarters are organizing the event.
more information coming soon.

UK Ukefest

July 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th 2009

Run Cottage

Hollesley

Suffolk IP12 3RQ

more information available soon on

www.ukulelecosmos.com/phpBB2/index.php



Essential Links from the World-Wide-Web

UkeTalk - <http://uketalk.com/links.html>

"Ukulele Spoken Here" is one phrase that comes to mind. If you want to talk ukulele or catch all the news that is news, this is a can't miss website.

Brudda Bu's Ukulele Heaven

<http://www.geocities.com/~ukulele/index.html>

If you'd like to learn the history of some of ukulele's greatest players, this site is absolutely essential.

Ukulelia - <http://www.ukulelia.com/>

The World's Greatest Ukulele WebLog" Need I say more?

Ukulele Cosmos - <http://www.ukulelecosmos.com>

One of the hottest ukulele forums on the web. Don't Miss It!

Ukulele Underground

<http://www.ukuleleunderground.com/forum/index.php>

Another really popular ukulele forum, lots of Hawaiian players and folks from the West Coast of the Mainland USA.

Flea Market Music - <http://www.fleamarketmusic.com/default.asp>

This is Jumpin' Jim Beloff's website. He has lots of great resources and an excellent forum as well. You can buy Flukes and Fleas there, too. Jim also has lots of songbooks, DVDs, and other great stuff there.

UkeLadyMusic - <http://www.ukeladymusic.com/>

Auntie Noel runs a really great shop. Her passion is ukulele and it shows.

Contact Us: phone 214-924-0408

or email noel.tardy@yahoo.com

Kiwi Ukulele

New Zealand's Ukulele Companion

<http://www.kiwiukulele.co.nz/>

Bounty Music

<http://www.ukes.com/>

Bounty Music Maui

111 Hana Hwy. #105

Kahului, Maui, HI 96732

open 9 :00 to 6:00 Monday thru Saturday * Sunday 10:00 to 4:00

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